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"We are working towards an FDA approval to tap into the US market"

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Bengaluru based startup HealthCube is an ISO 13485 certified company that has received certification from Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO). Its primary product is a medically balanced, technologically sophisticated, handy, portable diagnosis system, similar to a set-top box, that can be used easily anywhere by anyone with minimal training. It provides accurate results for reliable patient screening.



To find out more about the innovations taking place at HealthCube, BioSpectrum reached out to Dr Radha Rangarajan, Chief Scientific Officer, HealthCube, Hyderabad.

Edited excerpts

How, when and why was HealthCube launched?

HealthCube is a point-of-care technology-enabled service provider founded in 2015 with the vision of transforming diagnostic delivery and making diagnosis simple and hassle-free. Our primary product is a medical-grade, clinically accurate, portable diagnosis system, similar to a set-top box, that can be used easily anywhere by anyone with minimal training. The company was the outcome of a simple need. In India, pregnant women face a challenge in terms of going for visits for prenatal care. They need to get screened for blood pressure, pulse rate, blood glucose, anaemia and HIV, etc. However, due to lack of diagnostic labs in rural areas, only 5% women are able to get the tests done. We wanted to build a solution that would help them manage these tests at their convenience – as the first thought. While this was the beginning, it was soon realised that the problem of lack of diagnostic access existed for all healthcare services. This is because in the rural areas, especially the far-flung and economically backward regions of the country, the diagnostic coverage is almost non-existent due to absence of labs and shortage of medical staff. Thus, we created a Made-for-India product that comprehensively solves the problem of access to diagnostic services.

Our portable device can be used in the remotest regions by anyone with minimal training. It does not need internet access or even power supply to operate as you can simply plug it into a power bank and use it.

What are the key products and services of the company?

HealthCube's flagship product is a combination of smart diagnostics and artificial intelligence to measure vital, biochemical and physical parameters, and perform rapid tests for pregnancy, infectious diseases and inflammatory conditions. With this smart solution, HealthCube aims to add value to the services provided by thousands of healthcare practitioners, especially General Practitioners and frontline health workers. The data collected through HealthCube can be analyzed on customizable parameters and used to track trends in patient acquisition and disease occurrences. HealthCube is an ISO 13485 certified

company which has received certification from Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO).

Our other medical-grade product, AgeWell, is especially designed for the elderly and those who need to monitor their vitals regularly. The all-in-one AgeWell Health Monitor is operated by an app on the phone and measures blood pressure, blood glucose, oxygen saturation, pulse rate, temperature, respiratory rate and performs single channel ECGs. The results are shared in real-time with the family doctor who can respond quickly using teleconsultation. Family members can also feel assured by having their own access to the results via AgeWell CareMate App. In this way, AgeWell forms a 'Circle of Care' for its user members. It offers customized care with services and features like video consultation, pill reminder, digital prescription, digitized health records, fall detection, etc.

What are the challenges being faced by the company?

Developing and getting necessary approvals for products in the healthcare field involving technology is always a slow process. Medical devices are no exception. The process can sometimes take years, due to barriers -- especially around regulation. Since a device such as ours directly impacts the identification and treatment of various ailments, accuracy and efficacy is of paramount importance. We understand this and have spent a significant amount of time in developing the device and ensuring that we have all necessary approvals and certifications. Recently, we were also approached by the NITI Aayog to get this innovation out to all aspirational districts in India. We are not only selling to the government directly but also to the districts at the lowest levels.

How much revenue was generated in the FY20-21?

We faced a bit of a challenge during the pandemic since most of our work is with doctors and on field. However, we are growing at a fast trajectory. Since 2018, we have grown by about 5X to 6X y-o-y through to now. This is only the start and we expect to grow far more in terms of both revenues and profitability. Our growth projection is about 50% in 2021 relative to a baseline of 2019. This is because the growth is still slow due to pandemic. However, when corporations returned to work after the initial pandemic exile, HealthCube partnered with companies like Tech Mahindra and Tagros Chemicals etc for COVID-19 risk assessment of their employees as a part of return-to-work program. Next year, will probably go to a 3x from where we are now. Apart from the financial considerations, our aim is to bring about a major transformation in the Indian healthcare ecosystem by ensuring quality diagnostic access all over the country.

How much growth are you expecting in the new year? What are the major plans in store for 2021?

About seven lakh people have been screened and have benefitted through HealthCube in the last year and more than 20 lakh diagnostic tests have been completed. There are about 800 HealthCube devices across India, enabling both local care and public health. Our device enables patients to conduct tests faster and affordably thereby enabling quality healthcare. We have screened people under the 'Anemia-Mukt Bharat' initiative and other programmes in the past. we also regularly conduct surveys, which have been in states like Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Telangana and Uttarakhand. Besides India, HealthCube devices are CE certified and allow us to sell in Europe. We already have a presence in several African countries including Ghana, Kenya, South Africa and Uganda. We are also working towards an FDA approval to tap into the US market.

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